

Finding Your Voice

The Art of Assertive Communication



Objectives

- To identify your predominant communication style.
- To identify barriers to effective communication.
- To recognize what types of people are difficult for you.
- To learn new tools for communicating effectively.

What messages did we get
growing up about
communication?

(See Core Beliefs Handout)

Communication Styles

Passive

Aggressive

Assertive

Passive



Goal: To please, to be liked, to avoid conflict.

Resulting Feelings: Anxious, ignored, hurt, manipulated, disappointed in themselves, angry and resentful.

Benefits: To avoid unpleasant situations, short-term tensions and confrontations.

Costs: Get taken advantage of and don't get their needs met.

Aggressive



Goal: To win, dominate, assert power, to control and to humiliate.

Resulting Feelings: Self-righteous, controlling, superior and sometimes embarrassed or selfish later.

Benefits: Release anger, have control and get their way.

Costs: Alienate others.

Assertive



Goal: To give and receive respect while making known opinions, wants or feelings.

Resulting Feelings: Confidence and success.
Good about themselves and in control.

Benefits: Get needs met while maintaining positive relationships.

Costs: None!

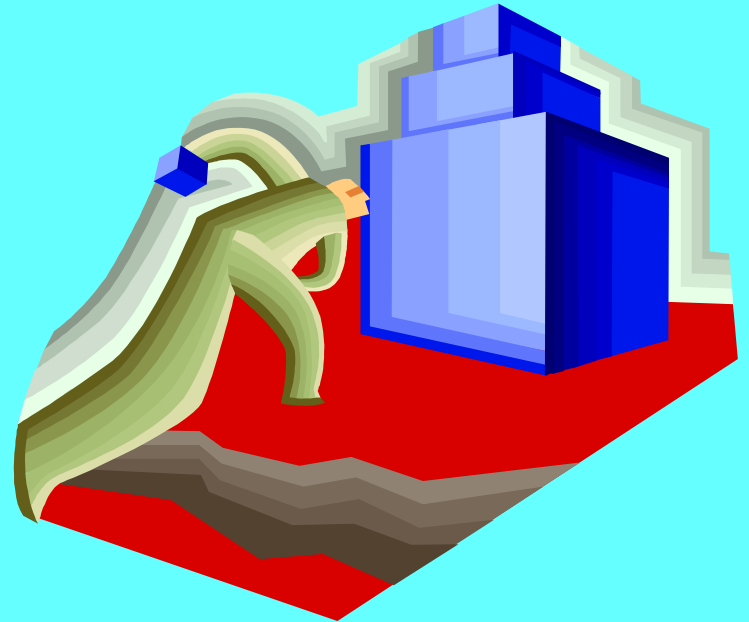
What is your predominant
communication style?

*Complete Personal Communication
Audit*

What gets in our way of
communicating effectively?

Barriers to Communication

- Attitude/Emotions
- Language
- Prejudice/Bias
- Position/Role
- Time
- Environment



Behavioral Barriers

- Ordering
- Ignoring
- Sarcasm
- Moralizing/judging
- Name calling
- False reassurance



Supervisor to Staff Barriers

- Intimidating staff
- Being unavailable to listen
- Lacking concern or understanding of staff person's interests
- Talking down (or disrespectfully) to staff

Staff to Supervisor Barriers

- Being suspicious
- Lacking confidence
- Being prejudice against people in power
- Using improper language
- Not considering the needs of the supervisor

Now let's find your voice...



Goals of Communicating with Difficult People

- To be heard!
- Get “the job” done!
- Neutralize the situation, don’t escalate it!
- Don’t take it personally!
- If what you’re doing doesn’t work...try something different!



Assertive Communication Techniques

- “I” statements: “I think/feel/believe...”
- Two-part message: “I think/feel/believe when you...”
- Three-part message: “I think/feel/believe when you..., because...”
- Empathic message: “I understand..., and I need/want...”

Phrases to Avoid

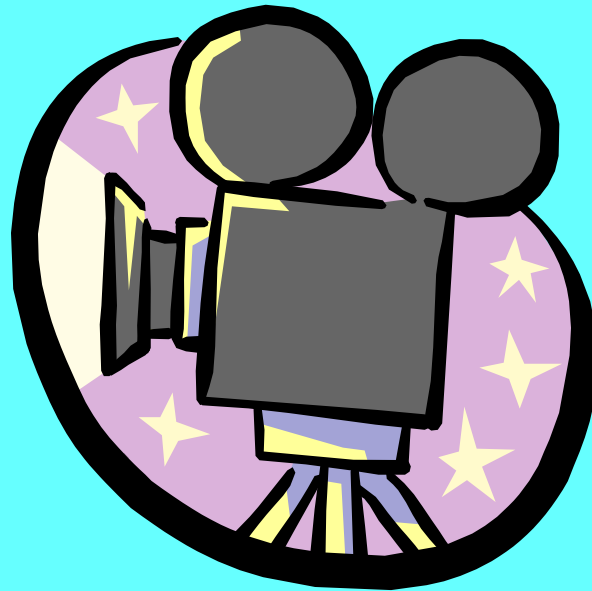
Threatening: “If” followed by “You”

Blaming/Shaming: “Why” followed by
“Can’t,” “Won’t” or “Don’t”

Labeling: “Never,” “Ever,” and “Always”

Generalizing: “You” followed by a negative
noun, adjective, or phrase

**Let's try out your
new skills...**



Tank

- Bully and bombard to get their way
- Raised voice
- Intimidating body language
- Profanity



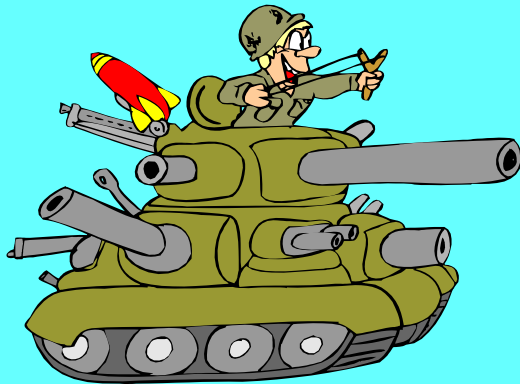
Tank

Do's

- Stand your ground
- Stay calm
- Stop the attack

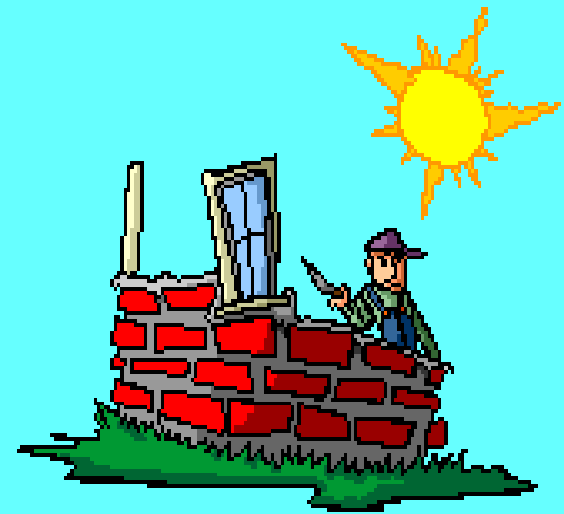
Don'ts

- Counter attack
- Get defensive
- Shut down or withdraw



Sniper

- Shoot from cover
- Use sarcasm
- Put opponents down
- Back-stabbing



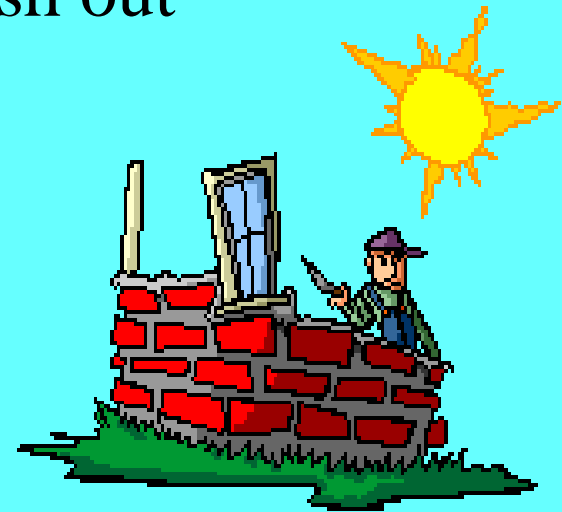
Sniper

Do's

- Ask for clarification
 - Intent – “When you say that, what are you really trying to say?”
 - Relevancy – “What does that have to do with this?”
- Suggest that, in the future, if there is a problem, come talk one-on-one.

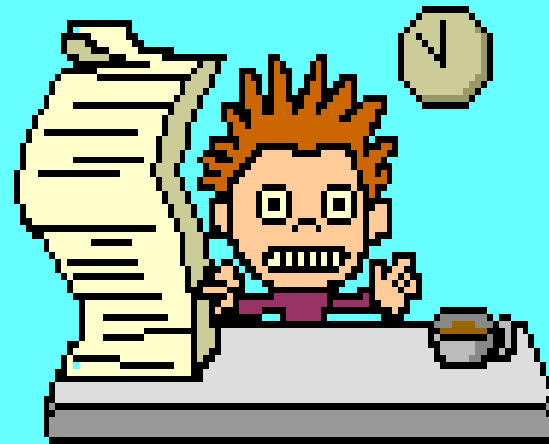
Don'ts

- React
- Take it personally
- Lash out



Grenade

- Demand attention
- Unexpectedly blows up
- Scream
- Intimidating body language
- Profanity



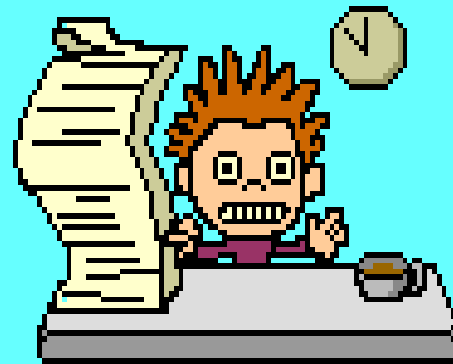
Grenade

Do's

- Take deep breaths
- Communicate that you would like to hear what they have to say, but not like this
- Stop the interaction temporarily

Don'ts

- Blow-up yourself
- Say anything until they calm down
- Take it personally



Experts/Know-It-Alls

- Their way is the only way
- Arrogant
- Inflexible



Know-It-All

Do's

- Be prepared
- Present new information with facts
- Use pronouns like “we” and “us”
- Be flexible
- Turn them into a mentor

Don'ts

- Become a know-it-all yourself
- Get defensive



Think They Know-It-Alls

- Insecure
- Stubborn
- Over-explain
- Defensive



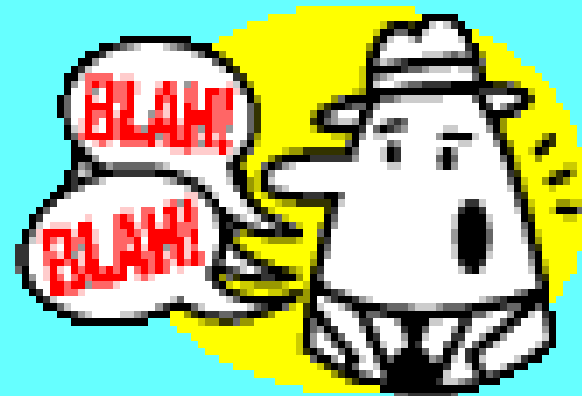
Think They Know-It-All

Do's

- Recognize their insecurity
- Have compassion
- Give them a little attention
- Ask them to help you understand their position

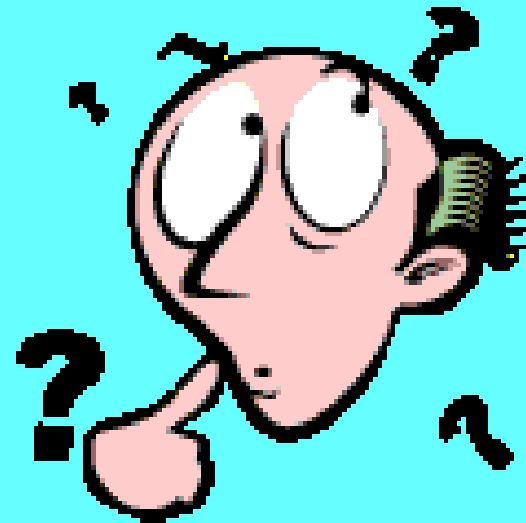
Don'ts

- Be judgmental
- Be too blunt



Indecisives

- Listen well
- Can't make decisions
- Don't complete tasks



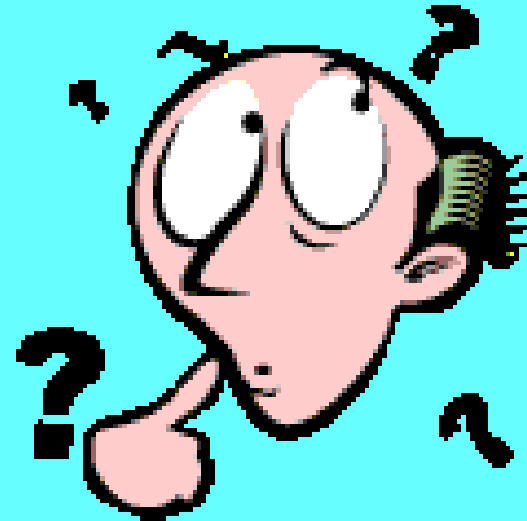
Indecisives

Do's

- Be specific and concrete about what you want
- Limit choices
- Be patient

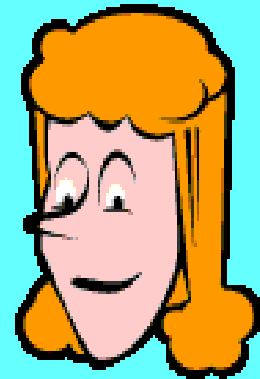
Don'ts

- Get angry
- Make the decision for them



Super-Agreeable

- Want to be liked
- Agree regardless of their opinion
- Often don't complete tasks



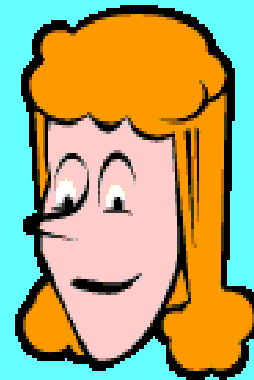
Super-Agreeables

Do's

- Let them know that disagreeing is okay
- Be specific about what you want from them
- Ask for negatives

Don'ts

- Make them feel shame
- Avoid conflict because they are too nice



Complainers/Negativists

- Whine
- Oppositional
- Resistant to change
- Feel powerless



Complainers/Negativists

Do's

- Listen and acknowledge what they say
- Consider their perspective
- Focus on problem-solving
- Separate from the negativity

Don'ts

- Argue
- Expect them to change
- Agree



Silent/Unresponsives

- Say nothing
- Avoid conflict



Silent/Unresponsives

Do's

- Start the conversation
- Ask open-ended questions
- Slow down
- If no response, state your plan

Don'ts

- Show frustration
- Lose your temper



Now that you have
found your voice...



Remember, you can not control other people's behavior, but you can influence how they behave with you!

